

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election violates the letter and spirit of federal laws governing campaign finance and advertising. (It is also an example of the dangers of media consolidation.)

This documentary is partisan, misrepresentative propaganda, and SBG's decision to force its stations to air it 10 days before the election is a disgusting attempt to slander a national official.

It is not news; it is a long pro-Bush advertisement calculated to affect the election outcome.

I believe that it would be equally inappropriate for SBG (or another broadcast company) to require its stations to air a documentary about Bush's activities during the Vietnam war, his drinking and driving, or his alleged cocaine use.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.